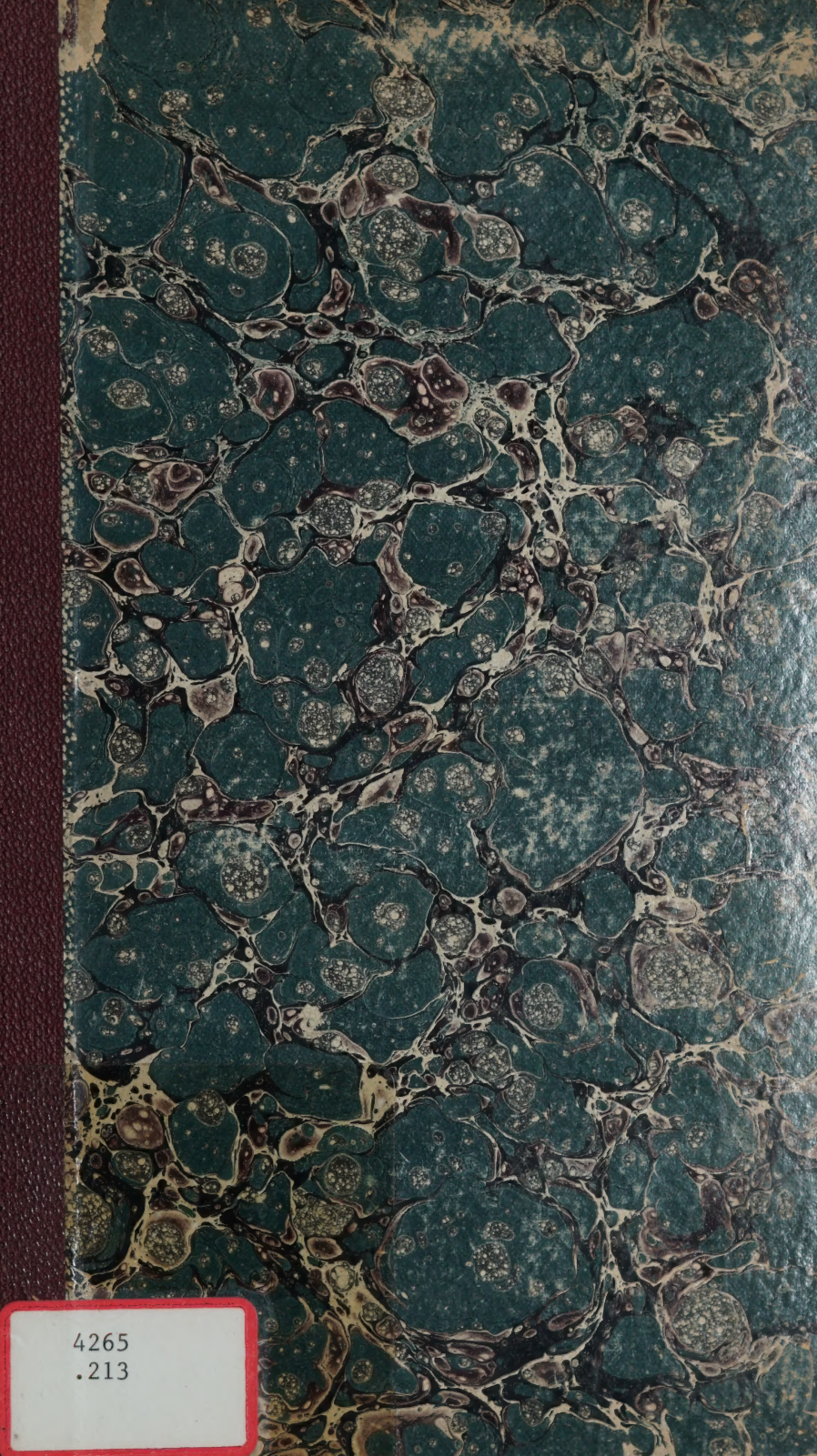




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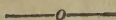
PORTRAIT

OF

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GEORGE THOMPSON, ESQ.

[RE-PRINTED FROM THE INDIA REVIEW, JANUARY, 1843.]



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G. Thompson
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William Lloyd Garrison
July 8, 1899.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

George Thompson, Esq.

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(WITH PORTRAIT.)

"Some (says Shakespear) are *born* great—some *achieve* greatness—and some have greatness *thrust* upon them." We need scarcely say to which of these three classes we should, with the greatest propriety, refer the gentleman of whom we have the gratification of presenting the following notice. The architect of his own fame—he has reared a fabric imperishable and "perfect as the marble."

As the friend of the Negro race, and participating in the victory achieved over West Indian slavery, the intrepid, consistent—the eloquent and unwearied opponent of the Corn Laws, those cruel and demoralizing restrictions on the happiness and comfort—nay the very existence of the poor and helpless labourers of our native land, GEORGE THOMPSON would deservedly command the best feelings and sympathies of our nature—of all whose hearts are capable of appreciating the value of his services, and the righteousness of the cause in which he has so ably laboured; but as the professed *Friend of India*, and the declared champion, pledged to do battle in the good cause of *justice to its inhabitants*, his arrival in Calcutta, for the express purpose of obtaining from personal observation and enquiry among the people themselves, information to strengthen the advocacy of their rights, gives him a tenfold claim, and, apart from every other consideration, renders him an object of deep interest to every well-wisher of the land in which he is now a brief sojourner. It is, therefore, with a feeling of congratulation that we direct the attention of our readers to the Portrait presented in our present number, and to the unlaboured but faithful narrative of events in the public life of one who has persevered so ably and so successfully in the cause of justice and humanity. Our notes are few—but as they deal in simple facts we feel assured that they will be read with sufficient interest to render any apology on that head unnecessary.

Mr. Thompson was born in Liverpool, on the 18th of June, 1804, and at two years of age accompanied his parents to London.

Consequent to the limited means of his parents, and the largeness of their family, Mr. Thompson enjoyed but few advantages of education, but, though chiefly instructed at home, he had an able tutor in the person of his father—a man of refined manners and extensive reading, who early inspired him with a love for books. The favourite authors of his youth were Milton, Young, Johnson, and Burke, to the influence of whose writings may, probably, be traced much of that eloquence which, however spontaneous, would fail not to acquire additional grace and vigour from models so perfect.

At the early age of twelve, owing to the still circumscribed income of his father, he was placed in a counting-house, and afterwards successively held various situations until his marriage in 1830, at which period he had acquired a pretty extensive acquaintance with mercantile affairs. The busy cares of life, however, had not destroyed his

love of books, which ever formed his chief companions. For several years he read largely in theology, and became familiar with most of the best English writers in that branch of Literature. The result may be readily anticipated; not satisfied with books alone, he sought the intercourse of minds congenial to his own, and, at eighteen, in conjunction with several youths of similar age, he formed a society for the advancement of mutual improvement, which assembled weekly for the purpose of reading Essays on various subjects, and then entering upon a free discussion of their composition, style, arguments, &c. At these meetings he first exercised himself in the art of elocution, and as a speaker was considered equal, if not superior, to any of his associates.

The governing principle which appears to have influenced Mr. Thompson's after career is best described in his own words to a friend—"At this period (he states) I formed a resolution, to which I have ever since religiously adhered—never to advocate any opinions which I did not sincerely cherish from an entire conviction of their soundness. I considered that a contrary course would lead to moral obliquity and a systematic disregard of truth. I resolved at the same time to repudiate the doctrine of expediency, to discuss every question on principle, and to determine the quality and character of all actions by their conformity with the requirements of truth and righteousness."

Having acquired confidence and fluency from his connection with the society already mentioned, he began, when about 20 years of age, to attend several meetings held periodically for the discussion of political, historical, and other subjects; he also joined two literary Institutions in which there were classes for the improvement of the members in the art of public speaking. From this time may be dated the commencement of Mr. Thompson's career as the champion of anti-slavery. In one of these class meetings, he took a prominent part in the discussion of the question of Negro emancipation, which would appear to have been warmly contested, as the debate lasted eleven nights.

At that time, though as fully convinced of the enormity of slavery as afterwards, he maintained the necessity of education as a necessary preparative for entire freedom. This view of the subject, however, he subsequently renounced on becoming intimate with several missionaries who had laboured in the West Indies; and his conversion to the doctrine of immediate emancipation was completed on reading the celebrated speech of Dr. Andrew Thomson, of Edinburgh.

In 1830, Mr. Thompson married Anne Erskine, the daughter of the Rev. Richard Spry, of Cornwall, for many years a minister in the connection of the late Countess of Huntingdon, and subsequently the settled Pastor of an independent congregation in Sussex.

Shortly after his marriage, Mr. Thompson was invited by the London Anti-slavery Society to undertake a tour for the purpose of bringing the objects of the Society more fully before the public, through the medium of public meetings and Lectures; and he accordingly entered into a temporary engagement, under which he visited the towns of the South-western coast of England. Success attended his efforts so much to the satisfaction of his constituents that, on his return to London, after an absence of three months, he was solicited to visit the principal

cities and towns in the north of England, and he accordingly renewed his engagement.

The good cause, however, had active and powerful opponents. The West India party, alarmed at the influence acquired by the Anti-slavery Society, selected Mr. Bothwick, the present member for Eversham, as the advocate of their cause, and instructed him to follow Mr. Thompson wherever he might go, and these instructions Mr. Bothwick faithfully observed.

The first encounter between the two opposing champions was at Manchester, where their debates, as may be imagined, created extraordinary excitement. They next met at Liverpool, where the Anti-slavery and Colonial parties arranged for a discussion, which continued six nights, in the spacious amphitheatre of that town.

The better cause still prospered, and Mr. Thompson's Lectures, as a further means of doing good, were afterwards published in a volume by themselves; Mr. Bothwick refusing to allow his to accompany them, although two sets of reporters had been expressly engaged, at a heavy expense, to give the whole proceedings *pro* and *con*.

Mr. Thompson, subsequently, had similar meetings with Mr. Bothwick in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other towns in England and Scotland, the inhabitants of which unequivocally testified their approbation of the glorious cause which Mr. Thompson so ably advocated; the citizens of Edinburgh, in particular, presented him with an elegant service of plate, which example was followed by a similar testimonial from the Anti-slavery public of Glasgow.

On the carrying of Lord Stanley's Abolition Act, in 1830, Mr. Thompson entertained the idea of qualifying himself for the English Bar, but relinquished it in favour of a mission to the United States, for the purpose of aiding the infant cause of Abolition of Slavery in that country: ere acting, however, upon this bold resolution, he established, in London and many other places, societies for the universal extermination of slavery and the slave trade. This duty discharged, he was quickly on the bosom of the great Atlantic.

Mr. Thompson sailed for the United States in August, 1834, taking with him Mrs. Thompson and their two children. His *good name*, however, had gone before him, and on his arrival in New York he was, consequently, refused accommodation in the hotels of that city. But the ill feeling thus early manifested changed not his purpose. Despite every opposition, he commenced a series of public lectures in Boston, and unprecedented excitement, under the influence of which he was constantly exposed to danger, was the consequence. Truth nevertheless prevailed over many, and abolitions rapidly increased, though not without a large share of that persecution which truth and justice ever encounter from those whose selfish interests they may oppose.

Mr. Thompson lectured almost daily, till the malice of the opposing faction became nearly uncontrollable. From July, 1835, the assembling of frequent mobs evidenced the danger he encountered from perseverance in the performance of his duty; to mark the spirit of their feelings—a gallows was erected at his door, and rewards offered for his abduction. These acts naturally exciting the fears of his friends for his safety, they entreated his departure from the country. Mr. Thompson, however, undauntedly continued his labours till, at length

satisfied that the great object he sought to accomplish—the awakening of public attention,—was fulfilled, in December, 1835, he left the shores of America, and reached England in January, 1836.

His reception on his return to his native land, it is hardly necessary to say, was most flattering. Subscriptions for the purpose of presenting him with some testimonial in honour of his services were contributed by all the leading philanthropists of the kingdom, and amounted to about £1,800 sterling.

The next public measure that engaged the attention of Mr. Thompson, was the abolition of the apprenticeship system, in which cause he embarked with Mr. Joseph Sturge, and finally succeeded, in 1838. For this service he was honoured with the thanks of Lord Brougham, in a speech delivered by that great philanthropist and statesman, in the house of Lords, on the 16th of July of that year.

Mr. Thompson's thoughts were now directed to India and to the advocacy of the cause of its natives ; and though the most tempting offers were made by several parties to induce the exercise of his talents in other directions, he declined all in favour of the chosen field of his labours. Solicited, however, by the Aborigines Protection Society, to plead the cause of India in connection with their object, he consented ; but, subsequently, finding the subject too vast to be properly attended to by a body directing its attention at the same time to other parts of the world, he relinquished his engagement, and lectured for some time independent of any association.

The object that now stimulated the zeal of Mr. Thompson was the formation of British India Societies which he successfully established in several places. He then once more returned to London, and, with the aid of a few zealous friends, organized a provincial Committee, under whose arrangements, in July 1839, a Public Meeting was convened in the great room of the Freemason's Hall, Great Queen Street, the object of which, the formation of a British India Society for bettering the condition of our fellow-subjects the Natives of British India, received the most encouraging support. The Chair was taken by Lord Brougham, and long before the time appointed for the commencement of the proceedings, the room was nearly filled by a highly respectable audience.

Among others on the platform, were the Nouwab Ikbal-ood-doula, of Oude, the Prince Juma-ooddeen, son of the late Tippoo Sultan ; Meers Ubdool Ullee, and Kureem Ullee, the agents of the Raja of Sattara ; Jehangheer Nowrojee, Hirjeeboy, Meerwanjee, and Dorabjee Manchurjee, Esqrs., of Bombay ; Sir C. Forbes, Bart, Sir J. Bryant ; Sir H. Strachey ; the Hon. Captain A. Stockenstrom, Lieutenant-Governor of the Cape of Good Hope ; General Goodfellow ; Major-General Briggs ; Colonels Thompson, Nichols and Sykes ; Captain Probyn, D. O'Connell, F. Finch, W. Ewart, and A. Chapman, Esqrs. and M. P. J. Pease, J. Sturge, J. H. Tredgold, T. Frankland, of Liverpool, J. Crawford, H. Blandshard, Mont. Martin, and the Hon. Secretary, C. Brown, Esqrs. the Revds. W. Hague, J. Keep, and Dr. Skinner, and W. Dawe Esq. of the U. S.—Drs. Bowring, and Hodgkin, and the Revds. J. H. Hinton, J. Sherman, and Dr. Murche.

A remarkable proof of the high opinion in which Mr. Thompson was held by Lord Brougham was given in the course of the proceed-

ings held on this occasion. The resolution for establishing the society was proposed by Mr. Finch, M. P. for Walsall, and when that gentleman sat down the noble chairman (who came to the meeting exhausted by the fatigues of the last night—not having retired to rest till past four o'clock that morning) addressing the meeting said—"I have no right to interfere with the arrangements of the Committee, but I have a particular interest in interposing on the present occasion. I am exhausted by the proceedings elsewhere, and shall be obliged, very shortly, to seek needful rest. If, therefore, I do not call upon my friend Mr. Thompson to address you now, I shall be deprived of the benefit of hearing him at all, as I cannot hear him where he ought to be heard—in the House of Commons. I hope, therefore, that Mr. Thompson will break the arrangements of the Committee, and second the resolution."—Loud cheers from the assembled multitude, and the calls for Mr. Thompson testified how highly they approved of his Lordship's request, and their admiration of the object of it.

Mr. Thompson came forward amidst tremendous cheering, and in a speech replete with the spirit of eloquence and persuasion, explained the views and impressions with which he had given his aid for the establishment of the British India Society.

"I can know but little (he said) of India; that which I have gathered respecting the condition of it, I have gathered from works and eye-witnesses. But I have not been slothful during the last nine months in collecting evidence touching the present condition of 80,000,000 of people who dwell between the Himalayah Mountains, Cape Comorin and the sacred waters of the Ganges, and the Bramah-pootra, on the one side, and the Indus on the other. It is a most extraordinary fact in the history of the country, that in the accumulation of benevolent institutions to guard the right and extend the liberties of mankind, there has never been formed, even to this hour, (for at present there is no metropolitan association in reference to this topic, although I trust not many minutes will elapse ere you will, with heart and voice, ratify the determination, that some individuals have come to, that a Society of this description shall be formed in London)—it is most extraordinary that in London, which owes much of its wealth to India, there should be no British India Society. I say it strikes me as a most extraordinary phenomenon, that there should have been no Society for making known the wrongs of our Mussulman and Hindoo brethren, who are so much entitled to the sympathy, the watchful care and interposition of the British people."

In the course of his animated address, after remarking on the evils under which India labours—the ignorance so prevalent in England of the existence of such evils—and the necessity of adopting decisive measures for their removal, directly appealing to the chairman, he continued—"In your presence, my Lord, and on behalf of those with whom I am associated in this cause, I disclaim utterly from the core of my heart, all connection with party, all desire to propagate a particular faith, all mercenary interested motives in the plan that we are now prosecuting. We desire to place this Society upon the broad and catholic principles which you yourself, my Lord, so eloquently expounded in the opening of this day's proceedings."

The length of the entire speech we regret compels us to limit our selections to one more extract.

"We shall be anxious to pursue a straight-forward and fearless course, boldly telling all we know, and all we fear respecting India, and we believe that we shall be the friends of mankind at large while we do this, we seek by the adoption of such a course, not simply the benefit of India, but the world. When will the fetters of the slave of America be broken—when will republican slaveholders—the worst and vilest in the world—when will the men who hoist the cap of liberty with one hand, and flourish the scourge with the other—who place one foot on the declaration of rights which they have signed, and another upon the neck of the coloured man—when will these be turned from their evil ways? Not when treaties shall be signed, and remonstrances shall be written, and pathetic appeals shall be made to their consciences, but when they shall be starved from their course, when the free labour of the 100,000,000 of India shall compete with the uncompensated labour of the 2,000,000 in the valley of the Mississippi and on the plains of the Carolinas—then it shall be done. When the Bombay cotton—when the indigenous cotton of India shall, in the Liverpool market, undersell theirs, then shall political economy constrain them to do that which justice and religion seek in vain at their hands to-day."

When the applause amidst which Mr. Thompson, at the conclusion of his speech, sat down, had subsided, Lord Brougham rising, said—

"I have always great pleasure in listening to Mr. Thompson, who is the most eloquent man and the most accomplished orator whom I know, and as I have no opportunity of hearing him where he ought to speak, inside the walls of Parliament, I am anxious never to lose an opportunity of hearing him, where alone I can hear him, in a public meeting like the present."

In connection with the objects of the British India Society, in October, 1839, Mr. Thompson delivered six lectures, in Manchester, "on the condition, resources, and prospects of British India, and the duties and responsibilities to do justice to that vast empire." These were reported in the "Guardian" and "Times," local Newspapers, and, afterwards, collected and published, in a separate form, in the United States, and, subsequently, in 1842, at the earnest desire as well as at the expence of the Right Hon. Lord Clifford, republished, in England, in an octavo volume, with "a Preparatory Address" by that nobleman, and "an Essay on the cultivation of Cotton in India, by Major General Briggs*."

From this valuable and interesting work, a brief Extract will best explain the motives and principles which influenced Mr. Thompson in his advocacy of the important object to the attainment of which his labours were directed. In his opening lecture, after a few introductory remarks, he thus continues:—

"Before I proceed further, let me, with all possible frankness, avow the character in which I stand before you to-night. I am not ignorant that the subject we are now to consider, has varied and complicated features, and is capable of calling forth the expression of widely differing opinions on matters connect with the social, religious, and political condition of mankind. I deem it, therefore, expedient, as I deem it honourable, to remove all uncertainty respecting the objects I have in view, the motives by which I am actuated, and the principles which I hold on these great questions, which are regarded as of vital importance in the places they respectively occupy in the minds of this community. I, therefore, without equivocation, without reservation, declare that I am the agent, the representative, the mouth-piece, the organ, of no party in politics or in religion, or in trade, that my object is to better the condition of the now wretched and helpless subjects of the British Government in Hindoostan; and to achieve, through their elevation, the good of other races, which in my opinion, are to be reached in their debasement and misery, principally, if not exclusively, by the operation of principles, whose mighty working must be commenced in that immense region, the destinies of which Divine Providence, in the accomplishment of His inscrutable designs, permits us, at present, to control. I believe, however, that the re-action of our benevolence would be most blessed, and that

* Published by J. W. Parker, London.

every Hindoo and Musalman we rescue from famine, and raise from penury, will be a labourer in an exhaustless mine of wealth, that will unceasingly pour its riches into our laps, and raise us, in our turn, from circumstances of abject dependence, without an alternative, to circumstances of freedom, with the opportunity of choosing from among the products of the earth, and of encouraging that industry which is the most honourable and most unconstrained, and the fruits of which will always be found the cheapest and the best. While, therefore, my hearts desire and prayer is that the time may speedily come, when every fibre of cotton wool woven or worn by the people of this country may be the produce of free labour, I ask for no restrictions, no regulations, no prohibitory duties, barring out from our ports the produce of any part of the globe of any kind, whether it be cotton to cover the naked, or corn to feed the hungry. Thanks to the irreversible laws which govern the social state, no such remedies are needed. I ask only for liberty, justice, and impartiality, convinced that if these be conceded and acted upon, every system based upon monopoly, and worked out by slavery, will totter to its everlasting fall."

Mr. Thompson, having thus unequivocally avowed his principles, proceeds in the introduction of his next lecture to set forth the solemn responsibility resting upon his country to cultivate an intimate knowledge of the condition and wants of India; that the power entrusted to the East India Company may be neither neglected nor abused. One extract will show Mr. Thompson's manner of arguing this part of his subject:—

"The possession of sovereignty over extensive kingdoms is a sacred trust, for which nations are not less responsible than individuals, a delegation from the Supreme fountain of power; and as the unalterable laws of nature forbid us to confound men with things, or to forget the reciprocal obligations subsisting between the sovereign and the subject, we can scarcely be guilty of a greater crime than to consider the latter as merely subservient to the interests of the former. Every individual of the immense population subjected to our sway, has claims on our justice and benevolence, which we cannot with impunity neglect; the wants and sufferings of every individual utter a voice which goes to the heart of humanity. In return for their allegiance, we owe them protection and instruction, together with every effort to ameliorate their condition and improve their character." These, Sirs, are the words of one of the most gifted of modern writers, and it will be allowed that they are not an inappropriate introduction to a lecture on the duty and interest of Great Britain, to consider the condition and claims of her possessions in the east. But it may be said that the sentiments I have borrowed, are more applicable to the duty of those who are the appointed rulers and guardians of our eastern possessions, than to us. I fully grant that they are primarily applicable to those who have taken upon themselves the fearful trust and responsibility of governing the myriad population of British India; but, if it can be shewn that those who have assumed the responsibility have forgotten or evaded it—that the Government of India has hitherto proceeded on principles of exclusive interests and self-aggrandisement—that proprietors have been more intent upon receiving large dividends for themselves, and obtaining lucrative appointments for their friends, than upon promoting the welfare of the people from whom their wealth is drawn—that the servants of the Company, while alive to the pay, the perquisites, and the pensions of office, have been indifferent to the happiness or misery of those around them—that directors have found enough to do to distribute their patronage and attend to their private concerns, and have been anxious rather to resist all experiments to better the condition and bring out the resources of the country, than to invent and carry out plans of improvement—if, I say, it can be shewn that the welfare of the multiplying millions of the east has been overlooked in a general and prevalent desire to advance party and personal objects, then, I think, it will be seen and felt by the friends of India, that the time is come to look from those who have proved themselves (to say the least) unequal to the discharge of their delegated trust, to those by whom that trust has been confided, and who are bound, before man and before God, to see that the power they have bestowed, is neither transcended nor abused. But further; if it can be shewn, that, through the incompetence or malversation of the rulers of India, a vast amount of misery and injustice has been inflicted upon the natives; that the prosperity of the empire

has declined ; that the sources of its revenue are gradually diminishing ; that already the symptoms of disaffection and distrust are appearing ; add to which, that the growth in wealth and comfort of the people of this country is greatly retarded by the present system of Indian administration—then, Sirs, I think a case has been made out warranting a prompt and effectual interference. I think I shall fully succeed, before these lectures are brought to a close, in shewing that such a case exists.

More than twenty years ago, the late Mr. Mill was of opinion, that the members of the court of proprietors (the democratical branch of the East India Company) had forgotten their duty, and had become utterly indifferent to the way in which the Government of India was conducted. After describing the constitution and powers of that court, and labouring to prove that “the aristocracy and monarchy were subordinate and subject” to it, he says—“Notwithstanding the power which, by the theory of the constitution, is thus reserved to the popular part of the system, all power has centred in the Court of Directors ; and the Government and the Company have been an oligarchy in point of fact. So far from meddling too much, the court of proprietors has not attended to the common affairs, even sufficiently for the business of inspection.” That the honourable court has not improved since this likeness was drawn, you will believe, when I tell you, that at a recent meeting, the members allowed themselves to be told by one of the directors, that their business was *not* to call for papers or to inquire into the acts of the court above, but, to receive their dividends, and leave other matters to their superiors. On that occasion, not a murmur, not a word of dissent was heard. The law was taken from the lips of the director with mute submission, and the constituency stood rebuked in the presence of their haughty representative. Little, therefore, can be looked for from men, who having long lost sight of their duties, have at last suffered their own rights to be taken away, and can now calmly submit to be told by their elected servants, that they have no right to look into their own affairs. Alas ! for the people of India while their destinies are in hands like these. It is impossible, sirs, to attend a meeting of the court of proprietors, with a mind suitably affected by the consideration of the vast magnitude and importance of the interests connected with our empire in the east, and there to mark the character of the debates, the reception which certain great questions meet with, and the votes that are given, without deeply lamenting the situation of those whose happiness depends upon the legislation of such a body of men. It appears quite evident that every measure intended for the effectual relief of the people of India, or for advancement to any considerable extent of the prosperity of this country in connection with the east, must be originated out of doors. It is not impossible that when such measures have been fully discussed and deliberately decided upon, and are loudly demanded by the British people, they may be adopted and carried out by the East India Company ; but the history of the past forbids us to expect that any comprehensive plan of amelioration or improvement will be put into operation, until it is rendered necessary and inevitable by the wishes and determination of the enlightened and philanthropic portions of this great community.”

In urging his hearers to an attentive and patient consideration of the state of India, Mr. Thompson thus sums up the motives which he considers to exist to the pursuance of such a course.

“I trust the time is coming, when we shall be no longer subject to the reproach, which up to this period we have so richly merited, of being ignorant of the true state of our possessions in the East. A variety of considerations, each more or less influential upon different classes of the community, urge us to make the condition and resources of India our peculiar study. Among these I may name, the pressing necessities and growing disaffection of the native population : the consequent critical tenure of our dominion in India, the falling-off of the revenue, especially that portion of it derived from the land ; the possible diminution in our imports from the West Indies ; the want we feel of a plentiful supply of cheap raw cotton ; and the report which has reached us this day, by that magnificent steam-vessel the British Queen, that there is a worm destroying, partially at least, the cotton crop of the United States ; the existing character and extent of slavery and the slave trade ; the recent suspension of our commercial intercourse with the Celestial Empire ; the probable results of the late change in the state of affairs beyond the Indus ; the policy of increasing the means of disposing to advantage of the manufactures of this country, and the

practicability of reducing the price of many of those articles of tropical produce which have become necessary both for the rich and the poor. There are many other topics which might with perfect propriety be named as worthy of our attention in connection with British India. There is perhaps no country in the world more replete with all that is calculated to fire the imagination, inflame the patriotism, and affect the hearts of the people of this country. The student in history—the lover of antiquity—the admirer of stupendous monuments of human skill and industry—the worshipper of the great and grand in nature—the speculator in the rise and fall of empires—the friend of education—the promoter of Christian missions—and the disseminator of the oracles of God—all these may find in the past history and present condition of British India, abundant food for reflection, and a limitless field for benevolent exertion. I do not, I need not hesitate to declare that I am influenced less by a desire to see India made a source of wealth to this country, than to see this country made a blessing to India. I would be the instrument, if I might be so honoured, of awakening my fellow citizens to a just sense of their responsibility to the countless multitude, of whose destinies they are at present the arbiters. I would direct them, not so much to the riches which lie beneath the surface of the soil, as to the immortal beings who dwell upon that soil. I feel that every addition made to our national territories, every accession to the number of our fellow subjects, increases, in exact proportion to the extent of that territory and the number of those immortal beings, our responsibility to that God who is the King of kings, and the Ruler of the nations of the earth. I believe that all who are governed in the name of Great Britain ought to feel the benign influence of her religion and her laws. I am anxious for the exaltation of our national character—not so much by the splendour of our military achievements as by the mildness of our sway; the equity of our jurisprudence; the impartiality of our statutes; the humanity of our penal code; the incorrupt administration of public justice; the protection of the weak; the liberation of the enslaved; the instruction of the ignorant; the trampling under foot of every unholy and unfraternal prejudice;—in a word, by the exhibition of the Christian character—the acting out of the divine injunction, “all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.”

Mr. Thompson in all his addresses on the subject of India, labours to demonstrate the close connection between the improvement of this country and the abolition of slavery in those countries where the system is supported by a demand for tropical produce. This, as our readers will have seen, is a prominent topic in the speech delivered at the formation of the British India Society. In the volume of lectures before us we find a lecture devoted to this branch of the subject, from which we cannot refrain from making a quotation. Mr. Thompson has previously argued that the purchase, by England, of slave-grown produce is the main support of the slave-trade in Africa and the slavery of the United States. He proceeds—

“Now, sirs, if in addition to this evil done to Africa, and to the slaves of America, it should appear that we are inflicting also a direct and grievous injury on the inhabitants of British India, our own fellow subjects, then will it be proved to the world that we are guilty of two evils, in leaving undone what we ought to do, to mitigate the condition of one hundred millions of the East; and inflicting on the slaves of America the foulest wrong, in that we are supplying to their tormentors and taskmasters, the bribe and the remuneration which they seek for carrying on their trade. Now, sirs, I hesitate not to say, that the consumption of tropical produce in this country, is a subject of incalculable importance to the interests of freedom and humanity; and I would earnestly exhort the anti-slavery public of this great nation to look well at the question in all its bearings. The demand for tropical produce is already immense. On a former occasion I took the opportunity of stating to what extent we imported tropical produce into this country; and already, large and influential bodies are petitioning for a reduction in the amount of duties on the produce of slave labour, from Brazil and elsewhere; and it was only the other day that your late representative, the present Governor-General of the Canadas, stated it as his opinion, that we could not fairly ask for the encouragement of the free-labour produce of Siam, and China, and Hayti, without at the same time, according

to all the treaties we have signed with Brazil, the United States, and other slave-holding countries—opening our ports for the admission, upon equal terms, of their produce also. Now, we know what the desire for cheap food is; we know what the hatred of monopoly is in this country; and I look forward with distress and dismay, to the time, when so loud and powerful shall be the demand for the extinction of all monopoly, and for the free introduction of the produce of every part of the world—that we shall behold an additional impetus given by the freedom with which the produce of slave countries is received into this country, to that system which we all hate, and the downfall of which we all most fervently desire. Now, it is asked by some of the friends of humanity, with more credit to their feelings than to their knowledge of the treaties we have entered into with other countries—that we should admit the produce of Java and China, and Siam, and Hayti, and other places, where free labour, and free labour only, is known,—into our ports, upon an equal footing with the produce of our own West India or British India colonies. But while we have treaties with the United States and other nations, which bind us to put them upon a footing of equality with the most favoured nations with which we have to do, you perceive that we cannot avail ourselves of the free produce of the countries I have named, without admitting the produce of those countries where they hold slaves and grow the articles we want only by slave labour, without a most wilful breach of that good faith which up to this moment has been observed both on the one side and on the other. See then the importance, the absolute necessity of looking to the East Indies. Go to your own dominions: visit your limitless empire in the east; grow the articles you want there; call into activity the energies of one hundred millions of willing husbandmen; and you avoid all collision with other nations,—you improve the condition of countless multitudes of your fellow subjects—you let treaties remain just where they are—you need no ships of war—you violate no principles of trade—you break no solemn engagements—you infringe no laws of nations—your own ships bring the produce here, and your own ships carry your manufactures there; and you prepare the way for the removal even of existing duties and restrictions. For if we were to encourage the East, and allow a fair competition between the free labour of the East and the slave labour of the West, we might open our ports as wide as they could be extended and give every other nation of the world the chance of selling their produce in this market; so successful would be the competition between the free and willing industry of our eastern fellow subjects, and the labour of the slaves who are held in bondage in the western parts of the world.”

We resist the inclination which we feel to quote from many other parts of these lectures, but trust that they will be brought within the reach of all who desire to possess them. We shall therefore lay them aside after we have extracted one passage in which Mr. Thompson, with his accustomed manliness, avows the nature of the means by which he seeks to benefit the condition of the natives of this country.

The means we shall adopt to advance our object are such as may be most candidly stated. We have nothing to conceal; nothing about which we shall for a moment equivocate. We shall diffuse information by means of lectures, essays, the reprint of compendious works, and, as soon as possible, by the issuing of a periodical publication. We shall endeavour to demonstrate, to the entire conviction of our fellow-countrymen, that the grandest sphere which the world presents for the employment of British capital is British India, in her agricultural capacity. We shall labour to keep prominently before the public mind, at the same time, the benevolent object of our society, and to guard with the utmost care against the introduction of any distracting or adulterating principles. We shall vindicate the right of the cultivator—assert his title to be treated with respect, to be admitted to a share in the management of his own public affairs, and to have his ancient native institutions recognised and regarded. We shall fearlessly animadvert upon the character of the Government, awarding credit where credit is due, and rejoicing in the first appearance of a disposition to relax the rigour of the British rule in India. We shall deem it a solemn duty to bring into notice whatever systems and regulations we deem injurious to the people of India, and derogatory to the dignity, honour, and usefulness of the British name.”

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“Again, the attention and feelings which may be awakened we shall seek to di-

rect into the best and most influential channels. The constituted authorities will not be overlooked in our endeavours to do good to India; they will be reminded of their responsibility—they will be urged to the performance of their duty—they will be given to understand, that our full determination is to carry to Parliament, as the final court of appeal, the cause of the injured native of India; and that while that cause shall never be sullied by calumny, vituperation, or causeless complaint, so neither shall it be disgraced by sycophancy, subserviency, or a timid submission to the unreasonable demands of any corporation, however ancient, however powerful, or however upheld by the smiles and co-operation of the state. We know, sirs, that there are many causes predisposing our countryman to look with interest and expectation to our possessions in the east. Within the last few days, since our last assembling here, we have received the intelligence of a victory which has brought under our immediate influence a large additional territory—the position in which we stand to several nations on our eastern and south-eastern border—the state of our affairs with China—the late desolating famine—the desire for a more abundant and cheap supply of cotton wool—the necessity for new outlets for our manufactures, and the spirit of enquiry and discussion which has appeared in the Court of Proprietors—these and other circumstances operate to produce a general feeling of interest in the condition and prospects of India. These circumstances will affect the minds of multitudes, while many more will regard with intense interest recent changes and events as connected with the social and moral improvement of the immense population of an empire thus mysteriously committed to our Government and to our care. I might refer, too, to other and still nobler enterprises and plans respecting India; but these are often dwelt upon, and dwelt upon more ably and eloquently than I can hope to do. I do not therefore refer to the great and magnificent plans for the spiritual enlightenment of that country. I deem it sufficient to say, that all these stand intimately connected with the onward progress and final consummation of our highest and our purest hopes and aspirations respecting the inhabitants of Asia. Now, upon the principles I have maintained, by the measures I have stated, for the objects I have set before you, we intend to pursue the work upon which we have entered. Our motives have been assailed; and they will be again, but we will vindicate our intentions by the consistency of our conduct and the meekness of our temper, rather than by the boldness and the loudness of our protestations. It is comforting to know that, however weak, however few, however despised, however obscure, however uninfluential,—if we have laid hold of a right principle, we shall yet triumph. “Onward!” shall be our motto. The spirit that never tired, that never quailed, while pursuing the great object of negro emancipation, has been invoked, has been awakened, is now stirring; and what we did for the slave of the West shall, with the help of God, be done for the Hindoo of the East.”

We must not omit to notice, that the lectures from which the foregoing extracts have been made, are printed as taken down, by the reporters, from the lips of the speaker while delivering himself *extempore*.

In January, 1840, in furtherance of the objects so ably agitated in his several Lectures, Mr. Thompson established the British India Advocate, edited for many months by Mr. W. Adam, and afterwards solely by himself. The circulation of this periodical to the extent of one thousand copies of each number affords the best evidence of the interest it excited; and though discontinued in consequence of the time and attention of Mr. Thompson being absorbed on another and, in character and principle, a kindred subject, it will, we understand, be revived on his return to England.

In 1841, Mr. Thompson entered the Court of Proprietors of East India Stock, and under the privileges of his new position vindicated the Rajah of Sattara—advocated the extension of the permanent Revenue Settlement to the Upper Provinces—and opposed the Affghan war.

In his defence of the Rajah of Sattara, in his first speech at the India House, there is one passage that evidences the independence and

spirit with which Mr. Thompson repelled the ungenerous insinuation that he had entered the Court of Proprietors as the appointed and feed advocate of the dethroned prince. "If the advocate of the Rajah (he replied) I am his unknown and un-bought advocate. My name if uttered in his ears would be an unmeaning sound. I hope for nothing from his gratitude, as I fear nothing from the opposition or displeasure of those from whom I differ."

More than twelve months after this we find Mr. Thompson meeting, but with a still more indignant tone, a similar imputation upon the disinterestedness of his advocacy of the Rajah's cause, contained in an article in the Bombay Times; and we hear that Mr. Thompson has asserted in this city—that, throughout the entire discussion on that question, he has received no other compensation than the conviction on his own mind of having done his duty. This we believe, as we are well assured that Mr. Thompson is not the man who would affirm to an untruth.

From the speech above quoted the following extract speaks equally to the honor of Mr. Thompson's character and principles.

"I speak here to day, less as a mere holder of India stock, than as a citizen of this empire: as one zealous for the honor of the British name, and the integrity of the dependencies of the crown. We have, I will not say by what means, got possessions of a vast country. It is populous, it is rich, it is capable of improvement to an indefinite extent. How I ask is the honour of which we are so proud to be preserved unsullied? How are our distant possessions to be retained and transmitted? Why, by one way, and by one way only. By acting upon principles of unbinding honour; by conciliating and attaching the natives of our territories; and by redressing every injury brought to your knowledge. You may say, "we are only tenants at will; at all events, we occupy under a very short lease, the renewal of which is uncertain; and though things may not be altogether what they ought to be, they will last our time, and we shall leave our predecessors to take care of themselves." This is neither honest nor loyal. This company are stewards over a domain, which they are bound to manage with all the regard to its improvement of which they are capable—we are not the proprietors of India. India belongs to the crown and the nation, and should be managed for the benefit, first of the natives of the soil, and next for advantage of the entire population of the British Empire. If, by acts of injustice and oppression, you alienate the feelings of the people, your tenure of possession will be transient; and losing the hearts of the people, you will next lose the country you have taken from them. But if you pursue a different course, a glorious and honourable career is before you."

Towards the end of 1841 Mr. Thompson was urged,—and very properly induced, to aid the laudable objects of the Anti-corn-law Association; and during that and the following year he was, consequently, chiefly occupied in exciting the interest of the public on the right side of this all-absorbing topic; the impossibility of having two great questions before the public at one time, unavoidably, for a season, abridging his labours on behalf of India.

Mr. Thompson accordingly, in February, 1842, visited Southampton, where his efforts, though of course violently opposed by the landed interest, met with the most triumphant success. For the services thus rendered a piece of plate, presented to Mr. Thompson in the presence of 4,000 spectators, evidenced the grateful feeling he had excited. Nor was this the only gratifying token he received of public approbation, his talent, zeal and philanthropy had deservedly gained for him the esteem and admiration of many of the influential citizens, by whom he was invited to offer himself a candidate for the Borough, and he accord-

ingly stood with Lord Nugent. They were, however, after an honourable struggle, successfully opposed by Messrs. Mildway and Hope.

In the very month following his defeat (Oct. 1842), Mr. Thompson again stood forth the zealous champion of the Anti-corn-law Association, and at the great meeting of the League, at Manchester, delivered a speech, the whole of which we would lay before our readers but that its length would absorb our entire space. As, however, it places the subject in a new and striking light, and shows Mr. Thompson's adherence to the principles he so early laid down for the government of his public efforts, to test all measures according to their conformity with the highest principles, we make the following extracts. The opinion entertained of this speech by those who listened to it, may be estimated by the fact, that, on the following morning, the Council of the National Anti-Corn Law League unanimously resolved to print, for immediate circulation, an edition of 10,000 copies:—

“There is one point of view in which this cause may be regarded, which to me appears an important one ; and as you have called upon me to address this meeting, I shall make a few remarks upon it. I mean the connexion between the present appalling distresses of the country, and the acts of the government—and between both of these and the morals of the people. It is one of the most inspiring and mysterious considerations in relation to the nature of man, that his morality, so mighty in itself, and so endless in its issues, should be exposed to mortification and injury, from every influence that reaches him in his passage through life. The passions of his parents and playmates affect it, long after he is removed from their locality and sight. The influence of antediluvian biography—the remotest imaginings of fancy—the tales of the nursery—the weeds of the garden—the love and fears of far-off strangers—the dreams of his neighbours—the fall of a thunder-storm—or the song of a ballad hawker—are all elements in the causes that collaterally affect the morality of our nature. Over these however, and a thousand other coadjutant forces, the will of man should, and can exert a presiding potency, and an all-subordinating control. The power to do this constitutes part of our moral obligation ; the omission to exercise this power—a power of which we are all conscious—which we all confess to ourselves—(though we too often plead the force of circumstances)—the omission to exercise this power, I say, is “the head and front of our offending.” Much of the world's morality is, however, the creature rather of constitution, interest, or habit, than of reflection and choice. But what then ? Why this most certainly : the more spurious, imperfect and contingent, the floating every-day morals of the world are, the more grave, the more necessary, the more incumbent is the duty of wisely and jealously warding off the obliquitous influences by which men are known to be governed to so great an extent, and to secure if possible that the causes which habitually affect our morality should be as sound as they are permanent. Perhaps there is nothing that can be named, next to the power of domestic life, that operates on our morals with such uniform emphasis as *the laws under which we live*. They are made to produce certain effects—they are armed with high sanctions—they are backed by an all but irresistible power—they are enforced by pains and penalties—they are a present, and constantly operating motive—either restraining or inciting. Let me illustrate this by a reference to circumstances around us. *Poverty* is, it is well known, when excessive, is in most instances the mother of crime. If, therefore, the laws of a country doom the greater part of its people to a state of poverty, they become permanent “ministers of sin ;”—and, as far as they have this tendency, they are chargeable with the guilt of immorality. What an appalling mass, then, of antagonist power are the governments of the world ? The anathemas uttered in Paradise contained no elements inimical to the moral interests of the banished parents of our race. None. But, alas, the influence of most bodies of human laws is ultimately ruinous to the character of the people for whose government they were framed. An immoral law is seminal revolution ; and, like all other seminal powers, requires only that time and circumstances should elaborate the mighty mischief. Hence the decline of former empires. “Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, where are they ?” And the same

cause will precipitate, if not counteracted, our own fall. Immoral laws generally begin their history by creating false wealth, and false standards of excellence and power—which again become the seeds of other evils, and work the ruin of the state.

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“What can be a finer theme for any man, placed in society in this world, and especially in this part of it, than the morality of governments? The theory of law is but an elaboration of the principles of justice, applied to society. But the practice of law is, for the most part, tyranny and fraud, supported by the wealth of the factions, and the ignorance and imbecility of the people. Whence came wars and rumours of wars, but from an invasion, somewhere, of the rights of political justice. Whence the wide-spread cruelties and oppression of India—the horrors of the slave trade—the wicked assaults on China—the perfidious aggression at Cabool—but from the same cause. If one nation, and that Great Britain, could be brought to feel the importance of making morality and politics synonymous, what would be the influence throughout the world? Then, indeed, our missionaries would not be thought satirists of their own nation; our statutes and the Bible would be but different parts of the same body of truth. Our literature would be purged of much of its pollution and falsehood, and the halls of justice, that are now too often clotted with tales and proofs of might overcoming truth, would be redolent of another spirit, and to them the persecuted and the poor would turn, with an eagerness similar to that with which the homicide sought the safety bench in the cities of refuge of old. No one, my friends, doubts the importance of the principles and examples of an individual. The nation's principles and examples, which are but the condensation of those of twenty-seven millions of souls, are surely of importance in the ratio of the population, and our influence over other kingdoms. My friends, this is a thought which I cannot enlarge upon; but it is worthy your most profound attention. I may illustrate it, by the case of the *abolition of slavery*. An act of simple justice, as between man and man. Yet, adulterated as it was, by the machinations of our opponents—think of the character we claim—the glory we have won—the influence we exert—the prospects we have opened—the destinies we have made certain—the blessings we have bequeathed—the peace we have secured—by this single, simple act, of common honesty towards a poor and oppressed race.

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“Assuming as I do, for the sake of argument—and deeming it unnecessary in your presence to prove—that the distresses of our country spring not from natural but from artificial causes—not from the chastening hand of God, but the death-dealing laws of man—not from the absence of the opportunities to trade, but, from the unjust and wicked prohibitions upon mutual interchange—and not at present going further into the workings of the national distress, I ask,—see you not the close connection between the acts of the government and the religion and morality of the people? See you not that that which deranges the springs of industry and, annihilates the profits of trade, saps the piety of the people—palsies the hands of the teachers of religion—renders comparatively abortive the labours of good men—strikes off the blossoms which their culture had made to appear—and curses with moral sterility the region which otherwise might have been a fruitful garden? The commercial blight which falls upon religious assemblies soon reaches the family and the school. The fire-side, once the seat of nightly hymn and prayer, where aspiring youth recounted the triumphs of the school, or rehearsed the favourite poem, becomes still and gloomy. The domestic comforts are reduced every week; the apparel of the family is worn, shabby, and patched; the wife, ignorant of her husband's difficulties, attributes her deficient allowances to his sinister habits of abated industry: the children join the clamours and complaints of the mother; and the husband, wrung to the soul by undeserved reproaches, perhaps commences an attendance at the tavern, which quickens the distress an hundred fold. At length the supplies altogether fail; the want of trade forces the pledge or sale of every thing that will produce money; and thus, the once comfortable abode of the respected mechanic is stripped to the bare walls, and the prospect is even worse than the past. Is this a mere fancy? Let those in our large towns, or in this city, who are dubious of these averments, turn into the next street, and visit kindly the abodes of our once independent population, and judge for themselves. The physiognomy of the parents will be enough. They have not blazoned their destitution, *but they have no bed*. They have kept their children from plying the doors of their neighbours with tales of distress; but they have cried themselves to sleep. The parents chide each other for fools

that they ever married, or were not more penurious in their prosperity. Their heart has relinquished hope—and taken to moods of alternate desperation and despondency : love is no longer in existence. The family is a mere juxtaposition of wretched creatures whose mutual sympathies have been destroyed by an involuntary self-ruin. Self-respect is given up : blasphemy against the God of heaven is heard, where the inmates are *desolate and hungry*. Maledictions fall heavy on the heads of governors—reverence for the laws is extinguished—plans of nightly theft are at length plotted without compunction ; and the heart of the once independent and contented mechanic swells now big with the turmoil resolves of suicide ; and now with vows of ruthless abandonment to supposed fate. I boldly say, that the cases of deterioration and ruin of this kind, so lamentably frequent in our country, during some years past, lie at the doors of our rulers and legislators. On them fall the accumulated maledictions of these beggared wretches, with each setting sun and morning light. They know the remedy as well as we. The history of such men is not yet written ; and I neither envy its contents nor desire to share their responsibility.

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“ Besides, the retention of a bad law operates mischievously in other directions. The sense of right and wrong grows strong by gratification and use. Popular indignation calls to its aid intrigue and cabal when it is manifest that reason and justice have no force ; and the defenders of wicked laws give a mighty impulse to sophistry and mammon to uphold what reason condemns and facts disprove. The retention of bad laws becomes a precedent to successive parliaments, and to other governments ; for, as far as the history of our base provision laws is known, it will be shown, that the nation that has covered the earth with its missionaries and its arts has yet the wickedness to starve its own poor, and the impolicy to ruin its own commerce, to retain the phantasmal dignity of an aristocratic faction. The authority of the English government is doubtless great, and will hereafter become the theme of frequent quotation, but, wherever its laws shall be imitated, Great Britain will be answerable for having done her best to propagate the monstrous falsehoods of the corn laws. Again, sir, a season like the present never comes without thoughts and theories of a revolution. Quiet and industrious men in multitudes catch the fervor of innovation : plans of indiscriminate vengeance are concocted : the press takes fire, and while one portion of it panders aliment to olden prejudices, another ministers to the new passions of constitution-makers and demagogues, to whom mischief is a mine of wealth and peaceable commerce a plague, and who ascend into the captaincies of the operative classes : youth unable to read are taught to pout at the wisdom of ages ; and men of battered fortunes, and still more battered reputations, find a market for their services, at least among the ignorant and profane—unhappily yet the majority of every nation. Informers become common, if not necessary, and by their vile arts inveigle the weak into ruinous and often fatal positions, and thus sedition's prelude proceeds. The contrivance of obnoxious laws swells the cause and proofs of discontent, and after a few outbreaks of the people, “ massacre ” is the word, and the organised force of the government triumphs over the disorderly power of the multitude, and the heartless upholders of insane laws quote their victories in support of the very abuses that originated the infraction of the law.

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“ The morality of the law should be its strength, and it is so, when their justice is “ judged of all.” Were governments just—states would be eternal. But we are told that it is impossible, by the wisest system of legislation, to prevent these periods of commercial distress—these visitations of famine—these recurring seasons of blight and mildew upon the fair prospects and blossoming hopes of a nation—these wholesale prostrations of a nation's morality, and general stagnation of its most sublime and elevating agencies. We are told that they are collapses as natural and necessary to the healthy progress of industry, as periods of rest and sleep to the animal system : and some will tell you that by studious and profound calculations they have penetrated the mystery hidden from vulgar eyes, and can prove by figures that the most precious portion of a community like ours should partially submit to famine as a punishment for being too industrious—and too ingenious—and too enterprising. (Hear, hear.) That it is not the corn laws, or other restrictions upon trade, that have entailed and worked these evils, but the genius of Watt, and Bolton, and Arkwright, and the avarice of men who have given employment to millions at home, that

they might clothe the bodies of millions abroad. These astute arithmeticians—these patient plodding calculators of a world's wants, and a people's destiny—who count spindles, and measure the power of steam—and reckon the noses of the population—and who greatly love the corn laws—not because they happen to possess the land, and realize a few extra thousands by their existence, ten per cent on which they are willing to give to the poor, if you will only let them keep the other ninety—who love these laws simply because of their wisdom and beneficence, and because Sir James Graham loves them, who once demonstrated that they were the most *unlovely* things that ever defaced the statute book of any country—these new lights who shed their radiance over dark intellects, will tell you that the evils we deplore come of machinery and its too productive powers. They will tell you that the Creator has invested the mind with powers destructive of itself. That the more the intellect expands, and the nearer it approaches to perfection, the condition of the bulk of nations must of necessity become worse. This is the pith and marrow of the famous argument of “*over production*.” The calculations of our modern Casios, who consume the midnight oil, when hungry children have wept themselves to sleep, bring them to the conclusion, that these distresses are the consequences of the triumph of mind over matter—the curses which genius has inflicted on a nation, which was happy in the days of the distaff, and knew no sorrow till the mule and the spinning-jenny were invented. And to prove their prophecies, and uphold their theory, they sustain laws which shut us out of the markets of the world, and when they have deprived machinery of fair play, turn round and say—“Behold the ruin it has wrought!”

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Mr. Thompson's visit to India, forms the latest, though we sincerely trust that it will not prove the last important event in his active and useful life. His motives in undertaking so long a journey, have been explained by himself in speeches delivered at various farewell meetings in England and Scotland, as well as in addresses delivered to the native community since his arrival in this country. From the latter we make several extracts, in order that our readers may be fully informed in reference to the objects which Mr. Thompson has in view. A week after his landing, Mr. Thompson was invited to attend a monthly meeting of a society composed of Hindoo gentlemen, established for promoting the acquisition of GENERAL KNOWLEDGE. At this meeting, Mr. Thompson, at the request of the chairman, delivered an address, and at once unfolded the object of his visit to these shores. He said:—

“I have long felt a deep and constantly growing interest in the condition, the prospects and the destinies of the people of India. I have read of India, and I have dreamed of India. I have written respecting India, and I have spoken in behalf of India. But dreaming, or talking, or writing, I have always had one wish present to my mind, that I might see the country for myself, might mingle with its people as I do now, and, through the knowledge acquired by travelling and observation, be able to be of more service to the cause of my fellow-subjects here. At length I am permitted, through the kindness of Divine Providence, to stand upon your soil, and this evening I find myself in the midst of some of the most educated and enlightened of the natives of the country. So great do I esteem this privilege to be, that I can hardly believe that I am not even now enjoying a delightful dream rather than gazing upon a real scene. Allow me to say it is no feeling of mere curiosity that has prompted my visit to your shores; still less a desire to advance my personal and worldly interests. My duties and engagements at home were of too important a nature to suffer me to abandon them, even for a short time, from any consideration less than a conviction that my future usefulness might be promoted by a knowledge of the actual state of things around you. I come not therefore, to gaze upon the splendour of your rivers, the sublimity of your mountain scenery, or the grandeur of your scattered monuments of former greatness. All these are objects of interest, and as they come in my way, I shall contemplate them with no ordinary regard. I come, however, to study the living population, and all other subjects, only in connection with the present and future well being of those who were created to possess and enjoy the riches and the splendour of this glorious region.”

He thus concludes the same address:—

“The object which brings me to this country is nearly allied to your own, in fact it is one and the same,—the acquisition of knowledge. I have heard of you and of your country by the hearing of the ear, and I think I know something of your condition, peculiarities and wants, from the study of the best informed writers; but this was not enough for one who sought to give an accurate representation of the real state of things. I have therefore come hither to see and judge for myself, and as long as I remain, shall esteem it a duty and a privilege to cultivate the acquaintance of the native population that I may understand their feelings and their views. The only reward I seek for any efforts in your cause, is to see you qualifying yourselves to be hereafter the enlightened vindicators of the claims of your countrymen to the sympathy and support of all the lovers of moral and political justice in England.”

At another meeting of native gentlemen, he thus frankly avows his feelings towards the native community, and his views of the general conduct and duties of his countrymen.

“He trusted he was entirely destitute of that prejudice which led too many of his countrymen to regard the natives of the countries they had colonized, or conquered, with disdain. He (Mr. T.) had no such feeling. With the religious views which he held, he should consider that he committed an offence against the Being who was the maker of all men, if he allowed country or complexion to make any difference in the treatment he pursued towards his fellow creatures. He respected men according to their virtue and intelligence, and judged them according to the circumstances in which they had been placed. If men were ignorant or degraded, through the disadvantages of their birth, and their want of education, they were not therefore to be despised, but to be commiserated and befriended. Weakness had a sacred claim upon strength. Neither nations nor individual were justified in taking advantage of the ignorance or helplessness of others. He frankly avowed his conviction, that his countrymen had too often forgotten their duty, and had been more anxious to extend their territory and increase their wealth than to promote the happiness and elevation of those whom they made subject to their sway. The time was coming he trusted, when the duties which England owed to her dependencies would be better understood and better performed.”

Again, in the same speech he says:—

“Without in the least degree wishing to bring discredit upon the *intentions* of the rulers of India, he had long thought it essential to the interests of the people of India, that their fellow subjects in England should cherish a more lively concern for their welfare. But this could not be effected, as long as a profound ignorance brooded over the affairs of India. It was to dispel this ignorance, that he resolved some years ago to exert his voice and his pen. He believed he had not laboured in vain. Still he had found it both difficult to obtain information, and difficult to bring his countrymen to believe that which he had collected from the best available sources. To remove these impediments, as far as might be, he had undertaken a voyage to India to see and judge for himself. Through books he had become familiar with the past history of the country. He had read the works of those who had described the country while under governments exclusively Hindoo. He had read various accounts of the Mahomedan conquests, and their effects. He was familiar with the history of his own countrymen in these shores, and the characters and acts of the many celebrated men who had ruled here in various departments. He had studied the mechanism and operations of the British Indian Government, and had left no means untried of obtaining accurate information of the real condition of the people under British rule. But though he would venture to say that his statements, as respected principles and general measures, could not be successfully controverted, yet at the same time, he had always felt the necessity in his peculiar circumstances, of possessing a personal acquaintance with the country. But there was another object he desired to accomplish by his visit to India. It was, to rouse the intelligent natives themselves, to a sense of the necessity of becoming the narrators of their own grievances, as far as they suffered under any, that were removable by legislation. He had no wish to inflame the minds of the multitude, or to spread a spirit of disaffection through their ranks. He should sincerely deplore the dissolution, (were it practicable) of the present connection between this country and Great

Britain : for this reason, chiefly, that he thought the people of England were just awakening to a sense of their duty, and would hereafter, if wise measures were adopted, be induced to manifest such an interest in Indian affairs, as would lead to the most wide and beneficial results."

Mr. Thompson disclaims all desire of concealment, or secret organization, in the carrying out of his plans. He is thus explicit on this point :—

"He did not wish these meetings to be considered *secret*. He had not in his heart a single wish or thought respecting India, which he was not prepared to avow in the most public manner. All that he had to say to his native friends, he was willing to say, if it were convenient, in the presence of his countrymen and the Government of the country. All his plans were in perfect unison with the maintenance and perpetuity of the British sway, because they were founded in justice and impartiality—principles, he conceived most likely to attach the people to their rulers. He had no means to purpose which were not pure, and peaceful, and constitutional. He could embark in no movement dictated by a spirit of faction, or promoted by improper agencies. Whatever objects he sought to gain (and they were all of a loyal and peaceable character) he sought to gain by the spread of knowledge, by moral power ; in a word, through the influence of the intelligence and virtue of the people."

In another of his weekly addresses, Mr. Thompson gives the following advice to his friends, and with this extract we shall conclude :—

"You should, besides, become familiar with the principles of your own Government, you should know the nature and character of the progressive changes which it has undergone, and the means by which those changes have been brought about. By such a process, you will understand how future changes may be effected, and how the acts of the Government may be modified or controlled. Let me say, also, that in your peculiar situation, you should study the history of England, and obtain a knowledge of the constitution and form of Government, as well as of the genius and spirit of the British people. I need not tell you that England is the fountain head from which your benefits must flow. The Charter under which you are governed is made in England. The men who rule you, through the power that Charter gives them, come from England. The monarch of these realms has her throne in England. The source of patronage is in England. The Board of Control is in England. The East India Company's Directors are in England. And, besides all these, and let me say above all these, and more powerful far than all these put together, there is an enlightened people, who with all their faults (and I would be the last man to praise my country beyond its deserts) have a strong sense of justice, a quick perception of what is right, a generous feeling for the helpless and oppressed, and an energy of character which when displayed in a righteous cause, has always triumphed over every difficulty. Such are the people of England, their enemies themselves being judges. This country and this people you should know. I fear no dissolution of any subsisting ties, from the cultivation of the most intimate knowledge of the people of Great Britain. Judge not of our country by the acts of a few. Judge us rather by those deeds of universal charity, which have gained us unsullied fame even at the ends of the earth. Our national power has been abused—our honour too often tarnished—our resources too often prostituted—and our religion too often disgraced—but the heart of England has not been turned from the love of justice, nor her arm paralyzed in the cause of the poor."

We have thus made Mr. Thompson the author of one of the most interesting portions of his own history,—the history of his mind—its workings, its principles, and its views, upon those great questions in which he has taken so conspicuous a share. This, as a public man, and a REFORMER (in the truest and best sense of the word) is *the* portion of his history in which mankind feel the deepest interest ; and it is the peculiar characteristic of Mr. Thompson's public addresses, that he leaves no room for conjecture respecting the motives which animate him, or the objects at which he aims, or the measures by which he

proposes to reach the goal of his desires. Openness, manliness, and transparency, are always conspicuous ; and these will command respect and confidence from honest opponents, as well as from admiring friends. Mr. Thompson carries his heart in his hand, saying to all,—“Search me, and prove me, and know my ways.” We believe that these moral qualities, rather than the possession of the gift of eloquence, have obtained for Mr. Thompson the position which he fills in the estimation of his countrymen, and not of them alone, but in the estimation of those in every land who desire to see the day, when, the emphatic words of Mr. Thompson, “*morality and politics* shall be synonymous.”

Having briefly traced the public career of Mr. Thompson through the past, it remains but to say a few words in connection with his labours at the present time. He has now chosen for his field, a wide and noble sphere, and one in which, unhappily, the labourers are too few. Should his life be spared, we trust he will be individually of great service to the country whose cause he has espoused, and find many worthy and zealous co-adjutors in his benevolent and patriotic toils. As his sole object, while in India, is to collect information and extend his observations on the actual state of things, we trust that all who have the means of rendering him assistance will place their means at his disposal. In proportion to the knowledge he obtains, will be his ability to serve the cause of India, when he shall hereafter (as we trust he will) stand forward to enlighten our countrymen at home, and to enlist their sympathies and energies in the benign work of ameliorating the condition of a hundred millions of human beings. As Mr. Thompson emphatically disclaims all mercenary and factious motives, he is entitled to the confidence and assistance of men of all parties ; and as his desire is to form just opinions, every opportunity should be afforded him, of seeing the workings of that great system by which this country is governed. We believe Mr. Thompson finds no reason to complain of the disposition of those who are at present exercising authority at this presidency. It must have been to him a source of sincere satisfaction, to find himself anticipated on one question of great interest and importance—that of slavery. We hope he may remain long enough to see the proposed acts on that subject adopted and carried out, and, also, to see other great measures of improvement commenced. So that, when he shall return to his native land, he may have a bright side as well as a dark one to present before his countrymen ; and, while he finds it his duty to point to many evils, and many defects, be at the same time able to point to many salutary reforms, and to herald the dawning of a better era upon these regions. May the God who has been his guide and protector hitherto, and thrown over him his shield in the hour of peril, and made him the honoured instrument of achieving much in the cause of suffering humanity, still be his conductor and defence, and make him yet more abundantly honoured and useful ! And, when at last he ceases to labour and to live, may the INDIAN and the NEGRO hold in equal and grateful affection, the memory of the labours and triumphs of GEORGE THOMPSON !

In person Mr. Thompson is tall, of a full and manly, though not robust

form : the features handsome, and, when discoursing on any subject of interest, express with peculiar animation and force the various emotions of his mind. The Portrait, we doubt not, will be recognised as faithful. The position and expression are both characteristic :—the latter presents, we think, more of what is commonly termed “life” than most of Mr. Grant’s sketches usually exhibit.

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